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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/986,226	10/22/2001	Paul Kenneth Whittingham	13347US02	4979

7590 04/18/2006

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EXAMINER


EVANISKO, LESLIE J

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2854

DATE MAILED: 04/18/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	Application No. 09/986,226	Applicant(s) WHITTINGHAM ET AL.	
	Examiner Leslie J. Evanisko	Art Unit 2854	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

#### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12/19/2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-27 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-27 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 03/01/02 & 12/19/05 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                   | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

## **REPLACEMENT ACTION**

1. Upon further consideration by the Examiner, the previous Office Action dated March 23, 2006 is hereby **withdrawn** by the Examiner in view of the new replacement Office Action set forth below. Note the only change from the previous Office Action (dated 03-23-2006) is the addition of the rejection under 35 USC 101 as set forth below:

### **Drawings**

2. The replacement sheets of drawings were received on December 19, 2005 and March 1, 2002. These drawings are approved by the Examiner.

### **Priority**

3. The benefit claim filed on December 19, 2005 was not entered because the required reference was not timely filed within the time period set forth in 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2) or (a)(5).

If the application is an application filed under 35 U.S.C. 111(a) on or after November 29, 2000, the reference to the prior application must be submitted during the pendency of the application and within the later of four months from the actual filing date of the application or sixteen months from the filing date of the prior application. If the application is a nonprovisional application which entered the national stage from an international application filed on or after November 29, 2000, after compliance with 35 U.S.C. 371, the reference to the prior application must be made during the pendency of the application and within the later of four months from the date on which the national

stage commenced under 35 U.S.C. 371(b) or (f) or sixteen months from the filing date of the prior application. See 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(ii) and (a)(5)(ii).

If applicant desires the benefit under 35 U.S.C. 120 based upon a previously filed application, applicant must file a petition for an unintentionally delayed benefit claim under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3) or (a)(6). The petition must be accompanied by:

- (1) the reference required by 35 U.S.C. 120 or 119(e) and 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2) or (a)(5) to the prior application (unless previously submitted);
- (2) a surcharge under 37 CFR 1.17(t); and
- (3) a statement that the entire delay between the date the claim was due under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2) or (a)(5) and the date the claim was filed was unintentional.

The Director may require additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional. The petition should be addressed to: Mail Stop Petition, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450.

In particular, please note the MPEP states in chapter 200 that “Any benefit claim that does not both identify a prior application by its application number and specify a relationship between the applications will not be considered to contain a specific reference to a prior application as required by 35 U.S.C. 120. Such benefit claim may not be recognized by the Office and may not be included on the filing receipt even if the claim appears in the first sentence(s) of the specification or an application data sheet.”

In this case, although applicant attempted to make a benefit claim in the first line of the original specification, since the applicant did not properly identify the prior

application by its application number, this statement in the original specification was not in compliance with 37 CFR 1.78(a) and therefore not recognized by the Office, as evidenced by it not being included on the filing receipt. Applicant's amendment filed December 19, 2005 to include the appropriate application number and thereby comply with the requirements under 37 CFR 1.78(a) renders the benefit claim untimely since it was not filed within the within the time period set forth in 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2) or (a)(5).

### **Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101**

4. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

5. Claims 1-27 are rejected under 35 USC 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Based upon the interim guidelines regarding subject matter eligibility published in the Official Gazette on November 22, 2005, although claims 1-27 are directed to a method, the method steps as recited appear to fall into a category of nonstatutory subject matter--specifically, as the judicial exception of "abstract ideas" which includes such subject matter as mathematical algorithms and legal rights. In particular, the method as claimed fails to provide a practical application in that it does not produce a useful, concrete, and tangible result. Specifically, the claimed method does not provide a tangible, real world result since the method only includes abstract steps of determining and comparing. It appears from the discussion in the interim guidelines that if applicant amended the claims to include a step of conveying or displaying the computed result of the method to a user, that would provide the method

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with a tangible result and insure the claimed subject matter is statutory. Note any amendment to the claims must be properly supported by the disclosure and must not include any new matter. For more information regarding non-statutory subject matter, please see the interim guidelines that can be found at the following website:

<http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/com/sol/og/2005/week47/patgupa.htm>

### **Double Patenting**

6. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the “right to exclude” granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown

to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

7. Claims 1-7, 9-11, 13-18, and 20-26 are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 15, 25, 28, 33, 43, 46, and 48 of copending Application No. 09/965,359. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because they each encompass a method of determining a number of plates to be used to print a predetermined number of labels including the steps of determining a minimum number of plates, calculating a first value representing an estimated production cost based on the minimum number of plates, increasing the number of plates, calculating a second value representing an estimated production cost based on the increased number of plates, and comparing the first and second values to determine the most cost effective number of plates to be used.


This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

### Conclusion

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **Leslie J. Evanisko** whose telephone number is **(571) 272-2161**. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th 7:30 am-6:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Andrew H. Hirshfeld can be reached on (571) 272-2168. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

  
Leslie J. Evanisko  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 2854

lje  
April 12, 2006